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1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
2 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----x

3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

4 v.

18 CR 328 (KPF)

5 AMIN MAJIDI,

6 Defendant.

7 -----x

8 New York, N.Y.  
9 October 31, 2018  
4:00 p.m.

10 Before:

11 HON. KATHERINE P. FAILLA,

12 District Judge

13  
14 APPEARANCES

15 GEOFFREY S. BERMAN

16 United States Attorney for the  
Southern District of New York

17 JOSHUA NAFTALIS

MAX NICHOLAS

Assistant United States Attorneys

18 CLAYMAN & ROSENBERG

19 Attorneys for Defendant

20 SETH ROSENBERG

BRIAN LINDER

IAVTMAJP

1 (Case called)

2 MR. NAFTALIS: Good afternoon, your Honor, Josh  
3 Naftalis and Max Nicholas for the government. With us at  
4 counsel table Matt Mahaffey from the FBI.

5 THE COURT: Thank you all. Good afternoon.

6 MR. ROSENBERG: Good afternoon, your Honor, Seth  
7 Rosenberg and Brian Linder for Mr. Majidi.

8 THE COURT: Good afternoon, gentlemen, and Mr. Majidi,  
9 good afternoon to you as well.

10 THE DEFENDANT: Thank you, good afternoon.

11 THE COURT: Mr. Rosenberg, do you have a copy of the  
12 indictment in this case?

13 MR. ROSENBERG: We do, your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Thank you. And do you also have a copy of  
15 the letter to you and to Mr. Linder that is dated October 19 of  
16 this year?

17 MR. ROSENBERG: We do.

18 THE COURT: And I believe you just placed both of  
19 these in front of Mr. Majidi, am I correct?

20 MR. ROSENBERG: Yes.

21 THE COURT: Let me ask the parties something before I  
22 begin, is there a position of the parties with respect to  
23 whether this transcript should be sealed or not?

24 MR. NAFTALIS: We don't think it needs to be, your  
25 Honor.

IAVTMAJP

1 THE COURT: That was my question, thank you very much  
2 for letting me know.

3 Sir, Mr. Rosenberg, to ask the extent I am directing  
4 questions to Mr. one of Majidi's counsel, should I be directing  
5 them to you in the first instance?

6 MR. ROSENBERG: Probably Mr. Linder would be your  
7 better choice.

8 THE COURT: I'm not going to opine on that, I want to  
9 make sure I'm asking the right person.

10 Mr. Majidi, your attorney has placed in front of you a  
11 copy of the indictment in this case, and he's placed in front  
12 of you a copy of a letter from the U.S. Attorney's Office. You  
13 may recall, sir, that at a prior proceeding before me you were  
14 arraigned on this indictment. I asked you a series of  
15 questions and you gave me a series of answers. Do you recall  
16 that, sir?

17 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.

18 THE COURT: And at that time my recollection is that  
19 you entered a plea of not guilty to the charges contained in  
20 the indictment. Am I also correct?

21 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

22 THE COURT: It is my understanding, sir, that today  
23 you wish to change your plea and you wish to enter a plea of  
24 guilty to Counts One, Two, Three and Four of the indictment in  
25 this case, am I correct?

IAVTMAJP

1 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

2 THE COURT: And let me talk to you about this, please,  
3 sir. Before I can accept a guilty plea from you, I need to ask  
4 you a series of questions, so let me please explain to you the  
5 purposes that those questions serve.

6 The first thing that I need to determine is that you  
7 are competent to enter a plea of guilty, you can see and hear  
8 and understand what is going on in the courtroom, and you're  
9 not under any influence that might impair you in your ability  
10 to perceive what is going on in the courtroom.

11 If I find you are competent, I will talk to you about  
12 the rights that you have and that you would be waiving by  
13 entering a plea of guilty. I will talk to you about the  
14 charges to which you propose to plead guilty and the penalties  
15 that are associated with those charges. And finally, I will  
16 ask you what it is you did that makes you believe that you are  
17 guilty of these offenses.

18 As you might imagine, Mr. Majidi, there are a number  
19 of questions that I need to ask you. They're all important.  
20 If at any time you cannot understand one of my questions, or if  
21 at any time for any reason you wish to take a break in these  
22 proceedings, let me know. If I do not hear from you, I will  
23 understand that you are hearing and understanding each of the  
24 questions that I'm asking.

25 Is that our understanding, sir?

IAVTMAJP

1 THE DEFENDANT: Thank you, your Honor, yes.

2 THE COURT: Ms. Noriega, could you please swear in  
3 Mr. Majidi.

4 (Defendant sworn)

5 DEPUTY CLERK: Please state your name for the record.

6 THE DEFENDANT: Amni Majidi.

7 DEPUTY CLERK: Thank you, you may be seated.

8 THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, the significance of my placing  
9 you under oath is that if you were to answer any of the  
10 questions that I'm about to ask you falsely, you could be  
11 prosecuted for a separate offense, and that offense is known as  
12 perjury. Do you understand that, sir?

13 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.

14 THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, how old are you?

15 THE DEFENDANT: 52.

16 THE COURT: How far did you go in school, sir?

17 THE DEFENDANT: I have my bachelor's degree from  
18 university and some graduate studies.

19 THE COURT: Have you ever been treated or hospitalized  
20 for any form of mental illness?

21 THE DEFENDANT: No.

22 THE COURT: Are you now or have you recently been  
23 under the care of a doctor or a psychiatrist?

24 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

25 THE COURT: And I'm going to ask you to bring the

IAVTMAJP

1 microphone that's to your left a little closer to you.

2 Are you under the care of a doctor at this time or a  
3 psychiatrist?

4 THE DEFENDANT: Psychiatrist.

5 THE COURT: [REDACTED]  
6 [REDACTED]

7 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]  
8 [REDACTED]

9 THE COURT: [REDACTED]  
10 [REDACTED]

11 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]

12 THE COURT: [REDACTED]  
13 [REDACTED]

14 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]

15 THE COURT: [REDACTED]  
16 [REDACTED]

17 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]  
18 [REDACTED]

19 THE COURT: [REDACTED]  
20 [REDACTED]

21 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]

22 THE COURT: [REDACTED]

23 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]  
24 [REDACTED]  
25 [REDACTED]

IAVTMAJP

1 THE COURT: [REDACTED]

2 [REDACTED]

3 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]

4 THE COURT: Does that have any affect of dulling your  
5 mind or impairing in any way your ability to see, hear, or  
6 understand what is going on in the courtroom today?

7 THE DEFENDANT: No, ma'am.

8 THE COURT: [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED]

11 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]

12 THE COURT: And other than your relationship with this  
13 psychiatrist, is there any other medical or mental health  
14 treatment that you are receiving at this time?

15 THE DEFENDANT: No.

16 THE COURT: Have you ever been treated or hospitalized  
17 for any form of addiction, including drug or alcohol addiction?

18 THE DEFENDANT: No, your Honor.

19 THE COURT: [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED]

22 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]

23 [REDACTED]

24 THE COURT: [REDACTED]

IAVTMAJP

1 THE DEFENDANT: [REDACTED]

2 THE COURT: In any way are you impaired as a  
3 consequence of any medication you may be taking for any medical  
4 or mental health condition?

5 THE DEFENDANT: No, your Honor.

6 THE COURT: Were there any other drugs, medicine or  
7 pills that you took in the last two days?

8 THE DEFENDANT: No.

9 THE COURT: In the last two days have you consumed any  
10 alcoholic beverages?

11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I shared a beer with my wife last  
12 night.

13 THE COURT: May I imagine, sir, that you're not today  
14 feeling the effect of the beer you shared with your wife last  
15 night?

16 THE DEFENDANT: That is correct.

17 THE COURT: And so there's no impairment occasioned by  
18 that?

19 THE DEFENDANT: No.

20 THE COURT: Is your mind clear today, sir?

21 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

22 THE COURT: Do you understand what is happening in the  
23 courtroom today?

24 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.

25 THE COURT: Mr. Linder, let me turn to you, please.



IAVTMAJP

1 Have you and your colleague had enough time to discuss this  
2 matter with your client?

3 MR. LINDER: We have, your Honor.

4 THE COURT: Do you believe that he is capable of  
5 understanding the rights that he has and that he would be  
6 waiving by entering a plea of guilty?

7 MR. LINDER: We do.

8 THE COURT: Do you believe as well that he is capable  
9 of understanding the nature of these proceedings this  
10 afternoon?

11 MR. LINDER: Yes.

12 THE COURT: Do you have any doubt as to your client's  
13 competence to plead guilty if that is what he wishes to do?

14 MR. LINDER: None whatsoever.

15 THE COURT: Mr. Naftalis, do you have any doubt as to  
16 Mr. Majidi's competence to plead guilty if that is what he  
17 wishes to do?

18 MR. NAFTALIS: No, your Honor.

19 THE COURT: Should I be directing questions to you or  
20 to Mr. Nicholas?

21 MR. NAFTALIS: To me is fine, your Honor.

22 THE COURT: Thank you.

23 Mr. Majidi, based on the discussions that I have had  
24 with you for the past few minutes, and that includes both your  
25 answers to my questions and my observations of your demeanor

IAVTMAJP

1 here in court, and based as well on the discussions that I just  
2 had with your attorneys and with the attorneys for the  
3 government, I find that you are fully competent to enter a  
4 knowing and informed plea of guilty if that is what you wish to  
5 to.

6 I have had your attorney place before you the  
7 indictment in this case. And I know I asked you questions  
8 about it previously, but some of them are sufficiently  
9 important that I'm going to ask them a second time. Have you  
10 read this indictment, sir?

11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I have.

12 THE COURT: Have you had whatever time you needed to  
13 discuss with your attorneys the charges to which you propose to  
14 plead guilty and any defenses that you might have to those  
15 charges?

16 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

17 THE COURT: I don't want the specifics of any  
18 communication you may have had with your attorneys because  
19 those communications are privileged, but I would like to know  
20 generally, have your attorneys explained to you the  
21 consequences of entering a plea of guilty in this case?

22 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, they have.

23 THE COURT: Are you satisfied with their  
24 representation of you in this matter?

25 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, very much so.

IAVTMAJP

1 THE COURT: I'm going to now explain to you certain  
2 rights that you have and would be waiving by entering a plea of  
3 guilty. I know you have been following me very carefully and I  
4 ask you to continue doing that, and I remind you of your  
5 earlier agreement if there's something that you don't  
6 understand or some other reason why you would like to take a  
7 break, you will let me know.

8 Sir, under the Constitution and laws of the United  
9 States, you have the right to continue with your pleas of not  
10 guilty to the charges contained in the indictment. Do you  
11 understand that?

12 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.

13 THE COURT: If you continued with your pleas of not  
14 guilty, you would be entitled to a speedy and public trial by a  
15 jury on the charges in this indictment. Do you understand  
16 that?

17 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

18 THE COURT: At a trial you would be presumed to be  
19 innocent and the government would be required to prove you  
20 guilty by competent evidence beyond a reasonable doubt before  
21 you could be found guilty. Do you understand that, sir?

22 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

23 THE COURT: A jury of twelve people would have to  
24 agree unanimously that you were guilty. You would not have to  
25 prove that you were innocent of these charges if you were to

IAVTMAJP

1 proceed to trial. Do you understand that, sir?

2 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.

3 THE COURT: At a trial and at every stage of your  
4 prosecution you are entitled to the assistance of an attorney.  
5 If and to the extent you cannot afford an attorney, one would  
6 be appointed for you at public expense free of cost to you in  
7 order to represent you. Do you understand that, sir?

8 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

9 THE COURT: If there were a trial in this case, the  
10 witnesses for the government would have to come into court and  
11 testify in your presence. Your attorneys could cross-examine  
12 the witnesses for the government, they could object to evidence  
13 offered by the government, they could offer evidence on your  
14 own behalf if you wanted them to do so. You would also have  
15 the right to have subpoenas or other documents or process used  
16 in order to compel witnesses to testify in your defense. Do  
17 you understand that, sir?

18 THE DEFENDANT: I do, yes.

19 THE COURT: If there were a trial in this case, you  
20 would have the right to testify if you wanted to do so, and you  
21 would have the right not to testify if you wanted not to do so.  
22 If you decided not to testify, no one, including the jury,  
23 could draw any inference or suggestion of guilt from your  
24 decision not to testify. Do you understand that, sir?

25 THE DEFENDANT: I do, yes.

IAVTMAJP

1 THE COURT: Another consequence of entering a guilty  
2 plea in this particular manner is that you give up your right  
3 to seek suppression or exclusion of the government's evidence  
4 against you. Are you aware of that, sir?

5 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I am.

6 THE COURT: Without giving me the specifics of your  
7 communications, have you and your attorneys had a sufficient  
8 opportunity to discuss whether there is a basis for you to seek  
9 suppression or exclusion of part or all of the government's  
10 evidence against you?

11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, we have.

12 THE COURT: Do you also understand that if you were  
13 convicted after a trial, you would have the right to appeal  
14 from the jury's verdict?

15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

16 THE COURT: And even now as you are preparing to enter  
17 this guilty plea, you have the right to change your mind and to  
18 continue with your previously entered plea of not guilty to  
19 these charges. Are you aware of that, sir?

20 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I am, your Honor.

21 THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, if you plead guilty and if I  
22 accept your guilty plea, you will give up your right to trial  
23 and the other rights I have been discussing with you, other  
24 than your right to an attorney. You have the right to an  
25 attorney whether you plead guilty or go to trial. But if you

IAVTMAJP

1 plead guilty, and if I accept your guilty plea, there will be  
2 no trial I will enter a judgment of guilty on Counts One  
3 through Four of the indictment.

4 I will sentence you at a later date based on  
5 information that I receive from you today, information that I  
6 receive from the United States Probation Office in a document  
7 known as a presentence investigation report, and information  
8 that I receive from you and your attorneys and from the  
9 attorneys for the government in connection with sentencing.

10 If you plead guilty, and if I accept your guilty plea,  
11 there will be no appeal on the issue of whether you committed  
12 the offenses charged in the indictment, and there would be no  
13 appeal on the issue of whether the government could use the  
14 evidence that it has against you.

15 Now I know I said a number of things there, sir, but  
16 were you able to follow me as I said them?

17 THE DEFENDANT: I followed them completely, yes.

18 THE COURT: Did you understand each of the things I  
19 was saying to you?

20 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

21 THE COURT: Do you also understand that if you plead  
22 guilty there is a degree to which you have to give up your  
23 right not to incriminate yourself? And what I mean by that is  
24 I will ask you questions later in this proceeding to confirm  
25 for myself that you are pleading guilty because you are in fact

IAVTMAJP

1 guilty and not for some other reason, and you will have to  
2 admit and acknowledge your guilt of the offenses to which you  
3 plead guilty. Are you aware of that, sir?

4 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I am.

5 THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, are you aware of each of the  
6 rights I have been discussing with you?

7 THE DEFENDANT: I am, yes.

8 THE COURT: Would you like me or your attorneys to  
9 provide any additional or clarifying information about any of  
10 these rights?

11 THE DEFENDANT: No, your Honor.

12 THE COURT: And are you willing to give up your right  
13 to trial and the other rights I have been discussing with you  
14 and enter a plea of guilty in this case?

15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

16 THE COURT: It is my understanding that you are  
17 proposing to plead guilty to four charges in this case, am I  
18 correct, sir?

19 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, your Honor.

20 THE COURT: It is my understanding that you are  
21 proposing to plead guilty to conspiracy to commit securities  
22 fraud in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section  
23 371; conspiracy to commit wire fraud in violation of Title 18,  
24 United States Code, Section 1349; securities fraud in violation  
25 of Title 15, United States Code, Sections 78jb and 78ff, and

IAVTMAJP

1 Title 17, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 240.10(b)(5),  
2 and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2; and in Count Four,  
3 wire fraud in violation of Title 18, United States Code,  
4 Sections 1343 and 2.

5 So there are four counts to which you propose to plead  
6 guilty. Is that your understanding as well, sir?

7 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, it is, your Honor.

8 THE COURT: Are the particular offenses that I just  
9 recited to you the offenses to which you propose to plead  
10 guilty?

11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

12 THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, I'm going to ask for your  
13 attention, and I will give mine as well, as we ask the  
14 government to recite for both of us the elements of each of  
15 these offenses.

16 Mr. Naftalis, thank you.

17 MR. NAFTALIS: Yes, your Honor. Starting with Count  
18 One, conspiracy to commit securities fraud, if the case were to  
19 proceed to trial the government would prove the following three  
20 elements beyond a reasonable doubt: First, the existence of an  
21 agreement or understanding to commit the unlawful object of the  
22 charged conspiracy, here securities fraud; second, that the  
23 defendant willfully and knowingly became a member of that  
24 conspiracy and joined in it; and third, that at least one of  
25 the co-conspirators committed an overt act in furtherance of



IAVTMAJP

1 the conspiracy.

2 The object of the conspiracy, as I mentioned, is  
3 securities fraud, and that is charged as a substantive count in  
4 Count Three. I will read the elements of that offense now.  
5 First, in connection with a purchase or sale of security, the  
6 defendant did any one or more of the following:

7 One, employ a device, scheme or artifice to defraud,  
8 or two, made an untrue statement of a material fact or omitted  
9 to state a material fact which made what was said under the  
10 circumstances misleading; or three, engage in an act, practice,  
11 or course of business that operated or would operate as a fraud  
12 or deceit upon a purchaser or seller.

13 Second, the defendant acted willfully, knowingly and  
14 with the intent to defraud.

15 Third, the defendant knowingly used, or caused to be  
16 used, A, any means or instruments of transportation or  
17 communication in interstate commerce, or B, the use of the  
18 mails in furtherance of the fraudulent conduct.

19 Now turning to Count Two, which is conspiracy to  
20 commit wire fraud, there are two elements of that offense. I  
21 basically already said them, but I will repeat them: First,  
22 the existence of an agreement or understanding to commit the  
23 unlawful object of the conspiracy, here wire fraud; and second,  
24 the defendant willfully and knowingly became a member of that  
25 conspiracy and joined in it; and then, as I mentioned, the

IAVTMAJP

1 object is wire fraud.

2 The elements of wire fraud, which are also charged as  
3 a substantive offense in Count Four, are the following: First,  
4 that there was either a scheme or artifice to defraud, or to  
5 obtain money or property by materially false and fraudulent  
6 pretenses, representations and/or promises; second, that the  
7 defendant knowingly and willfully participated in the scheme or  
8 artifice to defraud with knowledge of its fraudulent nature and  
9 with specific intent to defraud, or that the defendant  
10 knowingly and intentionally aided and abetted others in the  
11 scheme; third, that in the execution of that scheme, the  
12 defendant used or caused the use of private or interstate  
13 carrier or interstate wires. We would prove venue by a  
14 preponderance.

15 THE COURT: Thank you very much.

16 Mr. Majidi, I understand there was a lot to hear, but  
17 I saw you were following along, and may I confirm that you were  
18 following along as the prosecutor outlined the elements of the  
19 offense?

20 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I was.

21 THE COURT: Thank you. Do you understand, sir, that  
22 if you were to proceed to trial, that is what the government  
23 would have to prove at trial?

24 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do, your Honor.

25 THE COURT: What I would like to do now, sir, is talk

IAVTMAJP

1 to you about the penalties that are associated with these  
2 offenses, and I'm going to focus on the maximum possible  
3 penalties that are associated with each. I'm are deliberately  
4 using the term "maximum," sir, because I want you to understand  
5 the most that could possibly be imposed. I'm not saying this  
6 is necessarily what you're going to receive.

7 I do want to make sure that you understand that by  
8 pleading guilty you would be subjecting yourself or exposing  
9 yourself to the possibility of receiving any combination of  
10 punishments up to the statutory maximum terms that I'm about to  
11 describe. Do you understand that, sir?

12 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.

13 THE COURT: I'm going to focus first on restrictions  
14 on your liberty. The maximum term of imprisonment for these  
15 offenses vary, so let me go through them with you. The maximum  
16 term of imprisonment for Count One is five years, the maximum  
17 term of imprisonment for Count Two is 20 years, the maximum  
18 term of imprisonment for Count Three is 20 years, and the  
19 maximum term of imprisonment for Count Four is 20 years.

20 Do you understand that, sir?

21 THE DEFENDANT: I do, your Honor.

22 THE COURT: And do you understand as well that any  
23 term of imprisonment that I might impose could be followed by a  
24 term of supervised release? And I will talk to you about those  
25 terms in a moment, but first of all, are you familiar with the

IAVTMAJP

1 concept of supervised release?

2 THE DEFENDANT: I am.

3 THE COURT: And so let me review with you, please, the  
4 maximum terms of supervised release for each of these offenses.  
5 The maximum term of supervised release for Count One is three  
6 years, for Count Two is three years, for Count Three is three  
7 years, and for Count Four is three years. These would run  
8 concurrently, sir, so the maximum term effectively would be  
9 three years supervised release.

10 Let me talk to you, please, for a moment about  
11 supervised release, because I want to make sure that you and I  
12 have the same understanding when I use the term.

13 When I use the term "supervised release," what I am  
14 referring to is a period of time where you would be subject to  
15 supervision by the United States Probation Office. There would  
16 be terms and conditions of supervised release that you would  
17 have to follow, and if you were unable to follow those terms  
18 and conditions of supervised release the possibility exists  
19 that your term of supervised release could be revoked and you  
20 could be sent to prison to serve time without a jury trial.

21 If your term of supervised release were revoked, you  
22 would not get any credit for any time that you had served as a  
23 term of imprisonment. You would also not get any credit for  
24 any time that you had spent on supervised release in compliance  
25 with the terms of supervised release.

IAVTMAJP

1 Do you understand each of those things, sir?

2 THE DEFENDANT: I do, your Honor.

3 THE COURT: Do you also understand that there is no  
4 parole in the federal system. If you are sentenced to a term  
5 of imprisonment you would not be released early on parole.  
6 There is an opportunity to earn credit for good behavior, but  
7 even then you would have to serve at least approximately  
8 85 percent of any term of imprisonment imposed. Do you  
9 understand that, sir?

10 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

11 THE COURT: At the beginning of this discussion in  
12 this area we talked about the maximum terms of imprisonment.  
13 Do you understand that the aggregate maximum term of  
14 imprisonment in this case is 65 years imprisonment?

15 THE DEFENDANT: I do, your Honor.

16 THE COURT: In addition to these restrictions on your  
17 liberty, the maximum possible punishment also includes certain  
18 financial penalties. The maximum allowable fine in this case  
19 varies with each count, but let me review with you each of  
20 them. It tends to be the greatest of one of three things,  
21 either a number or twice the gross pecuniary gain derived from  
22 the offense or twice the gross pecuniary loss to persons other  
23 than yourself. For Count One, that number is \$250,000, for  
24 Count Two, it is \$250,000, for Count Three it is \$5 million,  
25 and for Count Four it is \$250,000.

IAVTMAJP

1           In addition, I could order restitution to any person  
2           or entity who has been injured as a result of your conduct. I  
3           can order you to forfeit any proceeds that you may have derived  
4           from the offense or any property that you may have used to  
5           commit or to facilitate the commission of the offense, and I  
6           must order a mandatory special assessment of \$100 per count of  
7           conviction, so in this case, \$400.

8           Do you understand that those are the maximum possible  
9           penalties to which you are subjected in this case?

10          THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do, your Honor.

11          THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, I have a series of questions  
12          that I must ask you, and it's my expectation that not all of  
13          them will be relevant to you. I will explain to you why I'm  
14          asking them as I do, but I want to preface it by saying they're  
15          not all relevant.

16          I will begin by asking: Are you a United States  
17          citizen, sir?

18          THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I am.

19          THE COURT: I ask that because some people who appear  
20          before me are not. A guilty plea can have adverse immigration  
21          consequences. But since you are a citizen, they would not have  
22          those consequences. I will ask you something different.

23          Do you understand that as a result of your guilty plea  
24          you could lose certain valuable civil rights, to the extent you  
25          have them today or could obtain them in the future? These

IAVTMAJP

1 would include the right to vote, the right to serve on a jury,  
2 the right to hold public office, and the right to possess a  
3 firearm. Are you aware of that, sir?

4 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I am.

5 THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, are you serving any other  
6 sentence at this time?

7 THE DEFENDANT: No.

8 THE COURT: To the best of your knowledge, sir, are  
9 you being prosecuted in any other jurisdiction at this time?

10 THE DEFENDANT: I am not.

11 THE COURT: Is there a concurrent SEC matter in this  
12 case, a civil action?

13 MR. NAFTALIS: Yes, your Honor, it's before Judge  
14 Nathan and it's stayed right now.

15 THE COURT: Thank you very much.

16 Mr. Majidi, do you understand that the case before  
17 Judge Nathan is, of course, different; related, but different.  
18 Do you understand that resolving the case before me would not  
19 resolve other cases that you might have before other judges?  
20 Are you aware of that, sir?

21 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I am, your Honor.

22 THE COURT: I'm going to ask you a different set of  
23 questions now that I know this is the one criminal case that  
24 you have. Without giving me the specifics of your  
25 communications, have you discussed with your attorneys the

IAVTMAJP

1 process of sentencing?

2 THE DEFENDANT: I have.

3 THE COURT: And do you understand that in connection  
4 with sentencing I must review certain factors that are set  
5 forth in a statute, and they're commonly referred to as 3553(a)  
6 factors because that's the statutory provision where they're  
7 contained. So do you understand that there are sentencing  
8 factors that I must consider in connection with sentencing you?

9 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

10 THE COURT: Do you understand that one of the factors  
11 that I must consider is something called the United States  
12 Sentencing Guidelines?

13 THE DEFENDANT: I know about that, yes.

14 THE COURT: Can I understand that you may have spoken  
15 with your attorneys about the sentencing guidelines?

16 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

17 THE COURT: And if I use the term "guidelines" or  
18 "sentencing guidelines," that's what I'm referring to. Will  
19 you understand that, sir?

20 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

21 THE COURT: I want to make sure that you understand  
22 that if anyone has attempted to predict for you what your  
23 ultimate sentence will be, their prediction could be incorrect.  
24 I will be the judge who will be sentencing you, and I don't  
25 have the information that I need today to sentence you



IAVTMAJP

1 properly. I need to hear from you later on in this proceeding,  
2 I need to hear from the probation office and the presentence  
3 investigation report, and I need to hear from you and your  
4 attorneys and from the attorneys for the government in  
5 connection with sentencing. So do you understand, sir, that  
6 today no one can predict with any confidence what your ultimate  
7 sentence will be?

8 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.

9 THE COURT: Do you also understand that if your  
10 ultimate sentence is different from what anyone may have  
11 suggested to you that it might be, if it is different from what  
12 you yourself expected or hoped for, if it is different from any  
13 guidelines range that may have been discussed in your dealings  
14 with the government, you would still be bound by your guilty  
15 plea, you would not be able to withdraw your plea of guilty  
16 based merely on dissatisfaction with your sentence. Do you  
17 understand that, sir?

18 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.

19 THE COURT: It is my understanding that there is a  
20 written plea agreement between you and the government with  
21 respect to your plea today. Am I correct, sir?

22 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

23 THE COURT: I have been given a document, it is a  
24 letter dated October 19 of this year, from the United States  
25 Attorney's Office to your attorneys, Mr. Rosenberg and

IAVTMAJP

1 Mr. Linder.

2 Do you have a copy of that letter from front of you,  
3 sir?

4 THE DEFENDANT: I do, yes.

5 THE COURT: The copy that I have I will mark as Court  
6 Exhibit 1 and give to the government at the end of this  
7 proceeding to keep safe.

8 Could I ask you to turn to last page of your document,  
9 for me, that is page 5.

10 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

11 THE COURT: Is that also the last page for you, as  
12 well?

13 THE DEFENDANT: Page 5, yes.

14 THE COURT: Are there four signatures on your page 5?

15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

16 THE COURT: Is one of the signatures yours?

17 THE DEFENDANT: Absolutely, yes.

18 THE COURT: Did you sign this document today, sir?

19 THE DEFENDANT: I did.

20 THE COURT: Did you sign it in the presence of your  
21 attorneys?

22 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

23 THE COURT: Before you signed this document, did you  
24 read it?

25 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

IAVTMAJP

1 THE COURT: Did you have whatever time you needed to  
2 have with your attorneys to review the document?

3 THE DEFENDANT: I did.

4 THE COURT: At the time you signed it, sir, did you  
5 understand this document?

6 THE DEFENDANT: I did.

7 THE COURT: I will not review every piece of it with  
8 you but there are a few points I would like to review.

9 I'm going to ask you please to turn to page 2. Let me  
10 know when you've gotten to page 2.

11 THE DEFENDANT: I'm there.

12 THE COURT: Thank you very much. Sir, I'm directing  
13 your attention to the third full paragraph of that page, which  
14 begins, "It is further understood." Do you see that, sir?

15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.

16 THE COURT: It is my understanding that in this  
17 paragraph you are agreeing to make restitution in an amount  
18 that I might determine later pursuant to various provisions of  
19 the United States Code. Are you agreeing to make restitution  
20 if and to the extent that I determine that there are  
21 individuals or entities who have been injured as a result of  
22 your conduct?

23 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I understand that.

24 THE COURT: And you are making that agreement, sir?

25 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

IAVTMAJP

1 THE COURT: In the next paragraph, sir, it is my  
2 understanding that you are admitting to the forfeiture  
3 allegation that is associated with Counts One through Four of  
4 the indictment, and you are agreeing to forfeit any proceeds  
5 you may have derived from the offense or any property that you  
6 may have used to commit or facilitate the commission of the  
7 offense, am I correct?

8 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I agree.

9 THE COURT: So I could ask this technical question:  
10 Are you admitting to the forfeiture allegation?

11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

12 THE COURT: Thank you. I'm looking at the paragraph  
13 that follows that, sir, the one that begins, "It is  
14 understood," and I understand this paragraph to be a list of  
15 undertakings that you are going to do with the government in  
16 this case. Is that your understanding as well?

17 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, it is, your Honor.

18 THE COURT: And I can read each one of those  
19 separately, but you have read this paragraph, yes, sir?

20 THE DEFENDANT: I read it carefully, yes.

21 THE COURT: And you are agreeing to do all of the  
22 things that you commit to in this paragraph?

23 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

24 THE COURT: Could I ask you, please, to turn to page 3  
25 and tell me when you have gotten to page 3.

IAVTMAJP

1 THE DEFENDANT: I'm there.

2 THE COURT: I'm looking at the very bottom of page 3,  
3 the last paragraph, and actually I'm looking at the paragraph  
4 before that as well. These paragraphs address things that can  
5 happen if it is determined that you have violated a term of  
6 this agreement or if you have committed additional crimes or  
7 given false testimony or committed other violations, that there  
8 are certain consequences to that. Have you read those  
9 paragraphs, sir?

10 THE DEFENDANT: I have.

11 THE COURT: Do you understand that if you commit the  
12 acts described in those paragraphs, the possibility exists that  
13 the government could take certain consequences?

14 THE DEFENDANT: I understand, yes.

15 THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, we have been talking about  
16 this agreement for a few moments now. Does this written plea  
17 agreement I marked as Court Exhibit 1 constitute your complete  
18 and total understanding of your agreement with the government?

19 THE DEFENDANT: It does.

20 THE COURT: To the best of your knowledge, sir, has  
21 anything been left out?

22 THE DEFENDANT: No.

23 THE COURT: Other than what is written in this  
24 agreement, has anyone made you any promise or offered you any  
25 type of inducement in order to get you to sign this agreement

IAVTMAJP

1 or to plead guilty here today?

2 THE DEFENDANT: No.

3 THE COURT: Has anyone threatened you or forced you to  
4 to plead guilty here today or to sign this agreement?

5 THE DEFENDANT: No, your Honor.

6 THE COURT: Has anyone made any promise to you as to  
7 what your ultimate sentence will be?

8 THE DEFENDANT: No.

9 THE COURT: Earlier you heard me refer to guidelines  
10 and the sentencing guidelines. Do you recall that part of our  
11 discussion, sir?

12 THE DEFENDANT: Of course, yes.

13 THE COURT: Do you understand that even if the parties  
14 have discussed how the guidelines might apply in your case, I  
15 have an independent obligation to calculate the guidelines?  
16 Are you aware of that?

17 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I am.

18 THE COURT: And so if my correctly calculated  
19 guidelines range were to come out to something different from  
20 what you may have discussed with your attorneys or with the  
21 government or anyone else, do you understand that that would  
22 not be a basis for you to withdraw your plea?

23 THE DEFENDANT: I do understand, yes.

24 THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, could you please tell me in  
25 your own words what it is that did you that makes you believe

IAVTMAJP

1 that you are guilty of Counts One through Four of the  
2 indictment. Why don't I begin by asking: Do you have written  
3 notes with you, sir?

4 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

5 THE COURT: That's very common. And are they to aid  
6 you in speaking with me today?

7 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

8 THE COURT: The only thing that matters to me is that  
9 the thoughts expressed in those notes are yours. Are they,  
10 sir?

11 THE DEFENDANT: They are mine.

12 THE COURT: I would be happy to hear them. Thank you.  
13 And I will ask you, please, to speak slower and louder than you  
14 think you need to.

15 THE DEFENDANT: Between 2014 and 2016 I was employed  
16 at Premium Point Investment, or PPI, an investment advisor  
17 located in Manhattan.

18 During that time I was a portfolio manager for the  
19 mortgage credit fund, a hedge fund that invested in, among  
20 other things, residential mortgage backed securities. The  
21 month's end net asset value of the funds that PPI managed was  
22 an important measure of the funds' performance and was  
23 disseminated to investors and potential investors through the  
24 mail and interstate wire communications. The funds' net asset  
25 value and their performance also determined PPI's management

IAVTMAJP

1 fees and performance fees.

2 Between 2014 and 2016, I participated in a scheme  
3 with, among others, Neil Ahuja, CEO of PPI, and Jeremy Shor, a  
4 trader at PPI, to fraudulently inflate the net asset value of  
5 the funds that PPI managed. Instead of marking securities in  
6 PPI's portfolio at their fair market value, I worked with  
7 Ahuja, Shor, and others, to mismark their value. I knew that  
8 the resulting monthly net asset value was inflated for the  
9 purpose of deceiving investors as to the fund's performance.

10 I knew that what I was doing was wrong.

11 THE COURT: Is there anything else that you would like  
12 me to know, sir?

13 THE DEFENDANT: No.

14 THE COURT: Please be seated. Thank you.

15 You indicated to me just a moment ago that when you  
16 were engaged in this conduct you understood that it was wrong.  
17 Did you also understand that it was illegal?

18 THE DEFENDANT: I did not, no.

19 THE COURT: You did not at that time. At some  
20 point --

21 MR. NAFTALIS: Could we --

22 THE COURT: Yes.

23 (Pause)

24 THE DEFENDANT: Let me rephrase. At the time I was  
25 uncomfortable with my conduct and I knew that by inflating the



IAVTMAJP

1 net asset values for the investors I was committing something  
2 wrong and potentially illegal. And illegal, yes.

3 THE COURT: Okay. So either at the beginning of your  
4 involvement in this matter or over time you came to realize the  
5 conduct in which you were engaged was illegal, sir?

6 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

7 THE COURT: Thank you.

8 Mr. Linder, do you know of any valid defense that  
9 would prevail at trial or any other reason why your client  
10 should not be permitted to plead guilty to Counts One through  
11 Four?

12 MR. LINDER: I do not, your Honor.

13 THE COURT: Mr. Naftalis, are there additional  
14 questions that you would like me to ask Mr. Majidi, or are  
15 there proffers you would like to make regarding any interstate  
16 elements of the offenses. He did make mention of both mails  
17 and wires, so I assume that the wire element has been  
18 satisfied, but I will hear from you if you think otherwise.

19 MR. NAFTALIS: We think the allocution is sufficient.  
20 We will represent that there were interstate wires, including  
21 emails, text messages, and there were also mailings. So we  
22 think the interstate elements of both the wire fraud and  
23 securities fraud are satisfied.

24 THE COURT: I also heard Mr. Majidi to say that he  
25 understood the purpose of changing or modifying the net asset

IAVTMAJP

1 value figures was in part to deceive investors, so I understood  
2 that to be an adequate explication of the intent to defraud.  
3 Do you agree?

4 MR. NAFTALIS: We agree.

5 THE COURT: Would you tell me, sir, at a high level  
6 the types of evidence that would be introduced if this case  
7 were to go to trial?

8 MR. NAFTALIS: Yes, your Honor. The evidence would  
9 consist of both witness testimony and documentary evidence.  
10 The witness testimony includes cooperating witnesses and lay  
11 witnesses. The documentary evidence includes emails, text  
12 messages, trading records, and would establish that between  
13 2014 and 2016 Mr. Majidi, Mr. Ahuja and Mr. Shor and others  
14 conspired and did mismark and inflate the value of securities  
15 in PPI's portfolio and misled their investors to defraud them.

16 THE COURT: Thank you.

17 Mr. Majidi, were you able to hear the prosecutor just  
18 now?

19 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

20 THE COURT: Do you understand, sir, that if your case  
21 were to proceed to trial that is part or all of the  
22 government's evidence against you at that trial?

23 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

24 THE COURT: Mr. Linder, do you agree there is a  
25 sufficient factual predicate for a guilty plea?

IAVTMAJP

1 MR. LINDER: I do, your Honor.

2 THE COURT: Is there any reason why I should not  
3 accept it?

4 MR. LINDER: None.

5 THE COURT: Mr. Naftalis, do you agree that there's a  
6 sufficient factual predicate for a guilty plea?

7 MR. NAFTALIS: Yes, your Honor.

8 THE COURT: Is there any reason why I should not  
9 accept it?

10 MR. NAFTALIS: No, your Honor.

11 THE COURT: Mr. Majidi, at this time do you wish to  
12 enter a plea of guilty in this case?

13 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

14 THE COURT: To Counts One, Two, Three and Four, sir?

15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, all four counts.

16 THE COURT: Thank you. Mr. Majidi, because you have  
17 acknowledged that you are in fact guilty as charged in each of  
18 these counts of the indictment, because I am satisfied that you  
19 know of your rights, including your right to go to trial, and  
20 that you're aware of the consequences of your plea, including  
21 the range of penalties that may be imposed, and finally because  
22 I am comfortable that you are knowingly and voluntarily  
23 pleading guilty, I will accept your guilty plea and I will  
24 enter a judgment of guilty on Counts One through Four of this  
25 indictment.

IAVTMAJP

1           We talked about sentencing earlier, sir, and at some  
2 point in this case we will begin the process of sentencing.  
3 The United States Probation Office will want to interview you  
4 in connection with the presentence investigation report that it  
5 is preparing. I am going to order that that interview not take  
6 place unless one of your attorneys or a representative from  
7 their office is present with you. Do you understand that, sir?

8           THE DEFENDANT: I do, yes.

9           THE COURT: And sir, let me say something else to you,  
10 that is not legal advice, I just want to make that clear. Your  
11 attorneys give you legal advice, I do not.

12           If and to the extent that you choose to speak with the  
13 probation office, I would ask you to ensure that what you say  
14 to them is as complete and as accurate as it can be. And I say  
15 that because the presentence investigation report is something  
16 that I rely on very heavily when I impose sentence. That  
17 report is most useful to me when it is accurate and when it is  
18 complete. You will have an opportunity to review the report  
19 before I ever see it, as will your attorneys, as will the  
20 attorneys for the government. I invite you to review the  
21 report before I see it because there may be information in the  
22 report that you wish to modify, that you wish to correct, or  
23 that you wish to object to, and I want you to have that  
24 opportunity.

25           So again, that is not legal advice. I want you to

IAVTMAJP

1 understand how the presentence investigation report factors  
2 into my sentencing decisions. Do you understand that, sir?

3 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

4 THE COURT: At this time, counsel, I'm asking both  
5 sides, are we setting a control date?

6 MR. NAFTALIS: I think that makes sense, your Honor.

7 THE COURT: How far out would you like to go? Six  
8 months?

9 MR. NAFTALIS: Six months is fine.

10 THE COURT: All right. Ms. Noriega, may we have a  
11 date, please?

12 DEPUTY CLERK: Monday, April 29, at 3:00 p.m.

13 THE COURT: At the moment, is that a date that works  
14 for both sides?

15 MR. NAFTALIS: Yes, your Honor.

16 THE COURT: Okay, thank you.

17 MR. LINDER: Yes, your Honor.

18 THE COURT: After comparing schedules, I decided I  
19 would prefer to have this sentencing date set in August.

20 Ms. Noriega, could I have a date in August, please?

21 DEPUTY CLERK: Friday, August 2nd, at 3:00 p.m.

22 THE COURT: Again I'm going to presume that everyone  
23 is available for the August 2nd date, and you will let me know  
24 as it gets closer if you are not.

25 I will ask the government to send its factual

IAVTMAJP

1 statement to the probation office at the appropriate time, and  
2 the defense can arrange for the interview with the probation  
3 officer at the appropriate time as we get closer to. And I  
4 will remind the parties in case I don't have occasion to see  
5 you again that I would like the opening sentencing submission  
6 two weeks in advance of sentencing and the responsive  
7 sentencing submission one week in advance of sentencing so that  
8 I have enough time to address these issues and think about  
9 everything that's in them.

10 Mr. Naftalis, is there anything else that the  
11 government wishes me to do today?

12 MR. NAFTALIS: No, your Honor.

13 THE COURT: Thank you. And Mr. Linder, is there  
14 anything else you would like me to do today?

15 MR. LINDER: Your Honor, may we have one minute to  
16 confer with Mr. Naftalis?

17 THE COURT: Of course. And Mr. Nicholas as well, I  
18 presume.

19 MR. LINDER: Yes, my apologies.

20 (Pause)

21 MR. LINDER: Your Honor, in light of the colloquy that  
22 the Court had with Mr. Majidi about the medications the  
23 medical, I would request once the transcript is prepared that  
24 we have an opportunity to review it and ask that the Court  
25 redact that portion of it from the public record.

IAVTMAJP

1 THE COURT: That's fine.

2 Let's go off the record.

3 (Discussion held off the record).

4 THE COURT: I think it is appropriate for the parties  
5 to have an opportunity to confer about what portions of the  
6 transcript contains sensitive information that is not necessary  
7 to be disclosed to the public. So I'm going to ask the court  
8 reporter, please, to send the transcript in the first instance  
9 before publishing it on the public record to the parties, and  
10 I'm going to ask them very promptly, upon receipt, to propose  
11 to me redactions. And I will review the redactions and give  
12 them my considered view on them.

13 You already know my views as to the appropriateness of  
14 transparency on the court record, but I accept that Mr. Majidi  
15 has given us information that, while important, is perhaps not  
16 necessary to be shared with the public. So I understand your  
17 concerns, and I will let the parties take the first crack at  
18 providing to me what they think should be redacted. But I do,  
19 again, understand from the parties that this is not to be a  
20 sealed transcript, and therefore it will not be.

21 Mr. Linder, does that make sense to you?

22 MR. ROSENBERG: Absolutely, your Honor.

23 THE COURT: And that's what we're going to do, and I  
24 believe that's clear to all who are present.

25 Mr. Linder, other than that issue, and I appreciate

IAVTMAJP

1 you raising it, is there anything else that you want to address  
2 with me at this time?

3 MR. ROSENBERG: Nothing, your Honor.

4 Mr. Majidi, there are certain things that I am  
5 obligated to tell you, and I will tell you them now. At the  
6 time of your arrest there were conditions of pretrial release  
7 on which you were released. Do you recall that, sir?

8 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

9 THE COURT: Do you recall perhaps signing a bond and  
10 signing other documents across the street?

11 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

12 THE COURT: Those conditions still apply. So I know  
13 you know that, but I am obligated to tell you this, so I am  
14 asking you, to the extent that you have committed to certain  
15 reporting schedules or things of that nature, they still apply.  
16 Do you understand that, sir?

17 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

18 THE COURT: Also, at the moment, there is a date set  
19 in August for us to see each other again for your sentencing.  
20 There is the possibility that I may require you to appear in  
21 court prior to that date. Do you understand, sir, that if I  
22 obligate you, if I tell you that you have to be in court, that  
23 in fact you have to be in court, and if you are not in court on  
24 a date that I order, you could be charged with a separate  
25 offense, and that offense is known as bail jumping. Do you



IAVTMAJP

1 understand that, sir?

2 THE DEFENDANT: I do.

3 THE COURT: So may I understand that if I order you to  
4 be in court, I will see you?

5 THE DEFENDANT: You will see me, yes.

6 THE COURT: That is what I need to know.

7 Anything else that anyone else wants to bring to my  
8 attention in this proceeding?

9 MR. NAFTALIS: No, thank you, your Honor.

10 THE COURT: Thank you all very much for your patience  
11 this afternoon.

12 MR. LINDER: Thank you, your Honor.

13 (Adjourned)